

WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS

Your input is an important element in this plan. To ensure that your views are considered, we have provided this form for your convenience. You may submit your comment(s) through the US Mail or email: Allen_Kempen@dot.state.ak.us

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COMMENTS

Comments must be received at ADOT&PF by 5:00 PM August 6, 2004.

We are filing these comments to resurrect a project that was removed from the draft Needs List and Pre-Draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program 2004-2006. Identified as **Need ID9549 – Dillingham: Coastal Trail Construction**. This project would have upgraded and hard surfaced 6.5 miles of pathways. The description read as follows: this will include approximately 2.9 miles of existing pathway on the Kanakanak Road from Dillingham to the intersection Kanakanak and Aleknagik Lake Roads, and 3.6 miles of new separated hard surfaced bike/pedestrian trails which continue from the newly constructed pathway at Shannon's and Aleknagik Lake Roads. Project termini will be at the intersection of Waskey and Aleknagik Lake Roads.

When a revised draft copy of the STIP was sent out, the entire project Need ID 9549 was deleted. We decided it would be in our best interest to split the project, cut our losses, and fight for the first 2.9 miles which was a far more strategic route, connecting the then existing 1.7 mile paved bike path located on the Aleknagik Lake Road to Downtown. This summer this project was completed. (It's absolutely beautiful!)

However, there are still no provisions for pedestrians along the stretch of highway from Shannon's Pond to the intersection of Waskey Road. Again this stretch was originally included in the pre-draft 2004-2006 STIP. This area has shown an immense amount of building growth over the last decade. In support of resurrecting this project, we recognize that the benefits are insurmountable, as follows:

- ✓ First and foremost, it would address safety and health issues.
Safety - Residents are in a hazardous situation walking or riding their bikes along the main highway. The continued bike path will offer children a safe place to walk to the school bus stops.

Health - The paved path provides an opportunity for exercise and fresh air, and a reason to shut off the TV set and attached electronics. People suffering from obesity and diabetes can walk or ride the bike path from their front doors! We have severe health problems with obesity and diabetes in our village communities.

- ✓ Employers use the bike path as an incentive for hiring employees from outside, making our community a more desirable place to live and raise a family.
- ✓ Dillingham and the community of Aleknagik would be further linked in a safe and healthy manner. The bike path has offered a safe place for community activities including:

Rural People in Motion – promoting healthy activities, sponsored by the Diabetes program at Kanakanak Hospital, and scheduled once a month
Tony's Run – 26-mile marathon held annually in honor of a fallen police officer
High School/Middle School cross-country

As we look at the future of our state's transportation system, we would encourage DOT to continue to provide in its budget enough monies to support pedestrian/bike paths. We understand that the percentage of monies allocated to bike paths in the future will decrease astronomically. We don't believe this is a good decision, especially when the rewards are so great.

We take pride in our bike paths. Community members sometimes take it upon themselves to keep the existing pathways open during the wintertime, brushing off snow to leave them open for pedestrian traffic.

We are also asking you to provide support for the Wood River Road Project. Your support will help move the Wood River Road Reconstruction project forward. We hope you can help to resolve any outstanding right-of-way issues that are getting in the way of having this project scheduled in the near future.

Thank you for taking our comments into consideration as you develop the transportation needs for this area.